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NEWS
WORTH
SHARING.**Metro wishes you a safe and happy holiday, Halifax!**

We're taking a break for Christmas, but be sure to pick up our Dec. 29 edition, featuring a look ahead to 2015

Jury finds Luka Rocco Magnotta guilty on all charges

Magnotta sentenced to life imprisonment on the murder charge with no chance of parole for 25 years

PAGE 9

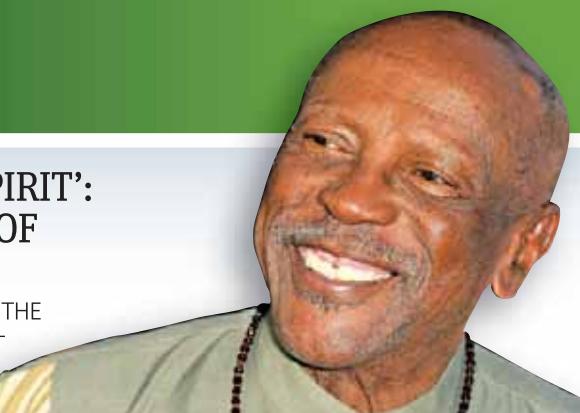
**'I'M DRAWN TO HIS SPIRIT':
BRINGING THE BOOK OF NEGROES TO LIFE**

ACTOR AND DIRECTOR TALK ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF ADAPTING THE N.S.-FILMED MINISERIES TO THE SMALL SCREEN

PAGE 8

**OH MEIER, THAT HAD TO HURT**

Team Switzerland's Timo Meier, a forward with the Halifax Mooseheads, is checked into the boards by Team Canada's Shea Theodore during first-period exhibition hockey action in Montreal, Tuesday, in preparation for the upcoming IIHF World Junior Championships. Canada dumped Switzerland 6-0 in both team's final pre-tournament game. The championship kicks off for real on Boxing Day. See coverage, page 20. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

**Mayor wants more people****Welcome to Halifax.**

Mike Savage says all he wants for every Christmas is more people choosing to make this city home

such as the Web.com golf event and the Davis Cup. Metro asked the mayor if an abundance of intangible qualities Halifax offers was enough to compete with the very tangible appeal of higher incomes provided by the oil sands in Alberta.

"Well, here's what I'd say ... I'd like to see us discover oil," responded Savage. "If you look at the economies that are doing well, they're quite often in Canada influenced by natural resources, and particularly petrochemicals."

Savage has been recently emphasizing the need to increase Halifax's population through improved immigrant retention and recruitment and improved employment opportunities. The city's profile has received plenty of positive attention in the last couple of years thanks to major events



Mike Savage

JEFF HARPER/METRO

The mayor of Halifax says there's one thing on his wish list for the city this Christmas season, and that's the same thing that's topped his wish list since taking office: More people.

"I'd like to see our population grow by about 10,000 people," said Mayor Mike Savage. "I'd like to have some significant new jobs for young graduates, new Canadians, under-represented groups."

Savage has been recently emphasizing the need to increase Halifax's population through improved immigrant retention and recruitment and improved employment opportunities. The city's profile has received plenty of positive attention in the last couple of years thanks to major events

RUTH DAVENPORT/METRO

See page 6 for more wants this

Christmas for Halifax

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Holiday season

Extra blood sought at clinics

Canadian Blood Services is asking Halifaxians to give a little extra this holiday season.

According to a release, the need for blood is constant but especially important during this time of year, and the Canadian Blood Services is hoping more people make a resolution to "share more of themselves" in 2015.

The following clinics are open during the holidays, and 50 per cent of appointments (167) are waiting to be filled.

The Halifax Blood Donor Clinic at 7071 Bayers Rd. is open Dec. 26 and 27 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Dec. 29 from 3 to 7 p.m., Dec. 30 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Dec. 31 from 8 a.m. to noon and Jan. 2 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Tantallon mobile blood donor clinic at the St. Margaret's Bay Centre is open Jan. 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

METRO

Pulled over

New driver charged with stunting on Highway 102

A newly licensed driver has been charged with stunting for pressing much too hard on the gas pedal.

The RCMP say on Sunday at 11 p.m., officers pulled over a vehicle going 163 kilometres an hour in a 100 km/h zone on Highway 102 near Exit 4C.

The driver — a 22-year-old man from Enfield — was arrested at the scene, and according to police, was a new driver who was drinking and in possession of marijuana.

The man has been charged with stunting — which is defined as driving more than 50 kilometres an hour above the posted speed limit.

The charge automatically suspends a person's licence for seven days, and your vehicle is seized for a week.

If convicted, the man also faces a fine of \$2,412.41 and six points assigned to his driving record.

The man is also up on drug charges for the marijuana that was allegedly found.

METRO



Younger granted temporary leave from cabinet

Energy Minister Andrew Younger, shown here in this file photo, is temporarily stepping aside from his cabinet duties to deal with undisclosed personal matters. Premier Stephen McNeil said Tuesday that Younger is facing personal matters that require his full attention and he requested a temporary leave. Younger, who represents Dartmouth East in the legislature, is also responsible for Communications Nova Scotia and Part One of the Gaming Control Act. Michel Samson will assume Younger's portfolios temporarily.

JEFF HARPER/METRO

Man facing charges for shooting himself: Police

Cole Harbour. Accused facing three counts of attempted murder in unrelated case

Quoted

"There was no cooperation from the victim."

Halifax Regional Police spokesman Const. Pierre Bourdages about the July 1st incident.

ada Day in Dartmouth during a July 1 concert at Alderney Landing.

The accused, according to police, was shot in the leg and taken to hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

Police say they could never determine specifically where the shooting happened as the victim wasn't co-operating.

Police have since determined the victim was carrying a loaded firearm in his shorts, and allegedly shot himself while handling the firearm.

Police say the incident in question took place on Can-

ada Day in Dartmouth during a July 1 concert at Alderney Landing.

The accused, according to police, was shot in the leg and taken to hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

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Downey is no stranger to

police. He is also facing 19 charges, including three counts of attempted murder, in relation to a shooting at a home in Cole Harbour on Nov. 30.

According to police, four intruders broke into a home at 52 Arklow Dr. and opened fire, injuring three people.

Bourdages said charges being laid in the July 1 incident had no bearing on the arrest in the Nov. 30 incident.

"There was forensic work being done and we got the information last week," Bourdages said in reference to the incident at Alderney Landing.

Downey is also facing charges in relation to a shooting at a home in Cain Street in Preston on June 4.



PHILIP CROUCHER
philip.croucher@metronews.ca

A 19-year-old man facing three counts of attempted murder in relation to an incident in Cole Harbour last month is now being charged for allegedly shooting himself while handling a loaded firearm in his shorts.

Police say the incident in question took place on Can-

Lower Sackville. Lawyer faces more sex assault charges

A Lower Sackville lawyer accused of living off the avails of prostitution and sexual assault is now facing two new charges

Duane Rhyno, who was arrested in Greenwich Oct. 1, was not present for his latest court appearance this week in Kentville.

His Halifax-based lawyer, Craig Garson, appeared and entered not guilty pleas on his client's behalf.

He also confirmed two

additional charges of procuring someone to have sex with another person were added to Rhyno's court information and indicated that he had no plans to challenge any search warrants previously issued by Judge Alan Tufts.

Garson explained to Tufts the defence and Crown attorney's office had agreed to an amendment to the terms of Rhyno's release conditions.

Under the revised agree-

ment, Rhyno will be able to travel outside Nova Scotia and will have his passport returned to him.

In return, he must inform Kings District RCMP when he plans to leave the province, his method of transportation, destination and his anticipated date of return.

During the hearing, Garson requested a two-week time-frame for his client's trial.

KENTVILLE REGISTER



Duane Rhyno, who was arrested in Greenwich Oct. 1, was not present for his latest court appearance this week in Kentville. KENTVILLE REGISTER

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NEWS

Report. Cops cleared after man injured during arrest

Nova Scotia's Serious Incident Response Team says there are no grounds to consider charges against police after a man broke his ankle during an arrest in July.

In a report released on Tuesday, investigators say a 27-year-old man who was a suspect in a home invasion in Sydney was arrested by Cape Breton Regional Police on July 2.

The report says the man tried to flee from an officer who left his vehicle and chased the suspect near some homes on George Street.

The man jumped a fence and injured his ankle before he was caught by the officer who

Findings

The report says the officers had grounds to arrest the man and his injury was caused by his decision to run from police and jump a fence.

was then joined by two other officers.

The man says he was beaten by police, but SIRT investigators say they saw no evidence of that when they met him the next day and witnesses say police had little physical contact with the man.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crime. Guilty plea made in credit-union fraud case

A former employee of a Credit Union in Antigonish has pleaded guilty to charges of theft and fraud over \$5,000.

Forty-year-old Stephanie Moran-McDonald of Lower South River appeared in court Tuesday.

MacDonald was charged in January following an investigation by the RCMP.

Police were contacted by

Colchester Co.

First Nation opposes disposal of fracking waste

A First Nations community is appealing a Nova Scotia municipality's decision to approve the disposal of millions of litres of fracking wastewater in its sewer system.

Indian Brook band chief

Rufus Copage says an appeal letter was sent to the chief administrative officer for the Municipality of Colchester County on Dec. 19.

Copage says his community strongly opposes transporting and disposing of fracking wastewater in the Debert sewer system and it wants county council to reverse its approval granted earlier this month.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Videos inadmissible in sex-assault case: Judge

Ruling. Judge says investigators took too much time between arresting James Keats and interviewing him

Hours of recordings of paramedic James Keats talking to police about allegations of sexual assault won't be counted as evidence by the trial judge.

Judge Claudine MacDonald ruled on Tuesday in Windsor provincial court that about eight hours of video viewed as part of a voir dire hearing are not admissible as evidence.

MacDonald said both of Keats' recorded statements viewed by the court were involuntary.

Further, she had concerns relating to the length of time the accused was detained after his arrest. Police held Keats for 15 hours before questioning him, the court heard, and it was 22 hours before he was brought before a justice of the peace.

MacDonald said the interview should have been conducted the night he was arrested, not after the RCMP officers had a chance to rest.

She also said Keats should have been brought before a justice without unreasonable delay, referring to Section 503 of the Criminal Code.

The 49-year-old paramedic from Kentville stands accused of two counts of sexual assault and two counts of breach of trust based on allegations put forth by a 72-year-old Mount Uniacke woman. Keats has been suspended from working as a paramedic.

The woman alleges Keats



James Keats makes his way into Halifax provincial court in June 2013. JEFF HARPER/METRO

Next trial date

James Keats will return to court in March to resume his trial.

ficers after his arrest would be allowed during trial.

Two videotaped statements from May 31, 2013, were presented during the hearing. He was arrested the evening of May 30 at a baseball game in Kentville, was brought to Windsor and then transferred to Enfield for questioning.

In the first video, which lasted about six hours, Keats denied any wrongdoing. MacDonald noted in the verbal summary of her ruling that Keats said he wanted to speak to a lawyer more than 20 times during the interview. The RCMP reminded Keats that he had already spoken to a lawyer and noted that he was under

no obligation to speak to them.

The first interview concluded at 4:08 p.m. May 31.

MacDonald said the conversation was largely one-sided and there was an "atmosphere of oppression."

During the second recorded interview, Keats said he understood he was talking to the police on his own free will, initiated the conversation and shared his side of the events that took place at the woman's home.

Despite saying he understood his rights, MacDonald said the second interview was linked to the first interview as Keats made references to not wanting to be known as a sexual predator. HANTS JOURNAL

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Prominent Haligonians share holiday wish lists with Metro

All they want for Christmas... We asked five influential citizens how, given no limitations, they'd improve life in the city

 **RUTH DAVENPORT**
ruth.davenport@metronews.ca

With Christmas just a day away, Metro put a simple question to five well-known Halifax denizens:

If time, money and limitations of modern science were no concern, what would your Christmas wish be for Halifax?

Even at this cheerful time of year, the responses suggest prominent residents are pondering weighty issues and how they could be improved in 2015 and beyond.

When in doubt, go sci-fi



Halifax Regional Police Chief Jean-Michel Blais

JEFF HARPER/METRO

Blais didn't waste the chance to rhyme off a few out-of-this-world wishes to deal with some grim real-world problems.

"A time machine ... to be able to go back in time and solve all our historical homicides," said Blais.

The former RCMP investigator said he's trying to increase the focus on HRP's unsolved homicides, some of which are more than 50 years old.

"If we could have closure for these people, the family members, that would be fantastic," he said.

Next on the list was a memory-wipe pen, similar to those used in the *Men in Black* movies, which could help some victims of crime forget the pain — or officers suffering from PTSD move past their traumatic memories.

A universal translator, à la the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy's* Babel fish, would help HRP's officers communicate with every one of Halifax's residents and visitors.



A cat is feeling the love at a cat café that opened up in New York City in April. Halifax MP Megan Leslie said she'd love a kitten for Christmas, but would settle for a cat café in Halifax. ANDREW BURTON/GETTY IMAGES

Blais also said he wants the rest of Canada to "wake up out of its stupor" and recognize what a great place Halifax is to live.

"We don't need oilsands," he said. "We've got the water, the people, the culture and the history."

Rounding out his wish list on a more sombre note, Blais said he'd eliminate poverty in Halifax if he could.

"Just from a social capital perspective If we could eliminate — or at least attenuate — poverty, wow," he said. "That would feed into the whole issue of making Halifax even greater."

Money for kids' programs



Andre Levingston

The owner of the Halifax Rainmen is wishing for a year of sold-out games, but doesn't want the money coming back to him.

Andre Levingston said Tuesday the extra income would mean the team could provide opportunities for chil-

dren without the finances to study abroad, or go to different camps.

"When we give kids experiences, then they grow up and they're able to make life better for us later on in our grey years," he said.

There's also a young 20-year-old man battling cancer right now in Halifax whom the team loves and supports, Levingston said, but preferred not to give his name.

"If I had only one wish in this world, it would be for him to get out of that bed healthy and strong to live his life," he said.

"If I had only one wish in

this world, it would be for him to get out of that bed healthy and strong to live his life," he said.

"I think people want to take transit," he said. "They don't want to spend an hour and a half sit-

ting in a bus when they could drive for 20 minutes."

Mason said practical and reliable transit in Halifax will require a "significant investment" — but nothing approaching the scale of cities like Toronto, where \$4 billion is being invested into a single subway line extension.

"If we spent \$200 million, on a per-capita basis, we still wouldn't be anywhere near any other major city doing rapid transit," he said.

Halifax Transit is poised to unveil a major redesign of the system, and Mason says he's confident it will provide the system the city needs.

"I'm very hopeful," he said.

Homes for the holidays



Wayne Mason

For Coun. Wayne Mason, the Christmas list consists of one thing: the best small-city public transit system possible.

"I think people want to take transit," he said. "They don't want to spend an hour and a half sit-



El Jones

The city's poet laureate would love to see a roof over everyone's head for her Christmas wish.

Given unlimited time and resources, El Jones wants free housing for everyone, but said single moms, refugees or

Holiday wishes

Even at this cheerful time of year, the responses suggest prominent residents are pondering weighty issues and how they could be improved in 2015 and beyond.

Megan Leslie isn't kitten around



Megan Leslie

THE CANADIAN PRESS

When the pressure is on, one Halifax politician's thoughts turns to adorable bundles of fur.

Halifax MP Megan Leslie said she'd personally love a kitten for Christmas, but her weeks in Ottawa mixed with weekends in Nova Scotia wouldn't be fair to a pet.

So she'd like to be a "bit cheeky" and extend her feline fever to the city.

"I think we need ... a kitten café or something," Leslie laughed.

"You could go when you need a little down time when the pressures are getting to you, and you just need to cuddle with some kittens."

There are cat cafés around the world, and Leslie joked one in our city would put us on the map.

"It would make us world-class," she said.

WITH FILES FROM HALEY RYAN/METRO

'What Christmas is all about'

Community rallies.

Family whose Xmas presents were stolen receives over \$1,000 worth of donated items

A Nova Scotia family robbed of household items and their Christmas gifts has been reminded of the true meaning of Christmas a week later.

Kings District RCMP and the Town of Berwick presented them with over \$1,000 worth of items donated by members of the local community after their home in Windemere was broken into and all the wrapped Christmas presents were stolen on Dec. 15.

The donations included cash, gift cards, a collection of toys and books for the family's two young children and a new laptop to replace the one that was stolen.

Help came from as far away as New Jersey, where a family with Annapolis Valley connections learned about the initiative on social

Quoted

"It seems that anybody who could make a donation, did so."

Kings County RCMP Const. Kelli Gaudet

media.

"They contacted us and made a donation," explained Berwick Recreation's Carol Boylan-Hartling.

"This touched a lot of people," said Const. Kelli Gaudet, who dropped by the town office on Monday to pick up the toys and donations, which she delivered to the family with Const. Ben Kershaw, the investigating officer on the file.

Employees at Berwick Foodland also got involved by donating a Christmas dinner to the family and raising \$350 for them. Local service clubs also pitched in the effort to assist the family, which was not insured for their losses.

Mayor Don Clarke said the way people in the Ber-



Carolyn Boylan-Hartling (left) stands next to Berwick Mayor Don Clarke and RCMP Const. Kelli Gaudet with more than \$1,000 worth of cash, gift cards and items collected through an initiative co-ordinated by the Kings District RCMP and the Town of Berwick for a Windermere family who was robbed Dec. 15. KENTVILLE REGISTER

wick area rallied behind the family came as no surprise to him.

"Berwick and District is a great community and people have proven that this kind of

thing is what Christmas is all about," he said.

KING'S COUNTY REGISTER

In 2015

African-Canadian education advisory group faces audit

The Nova Scotia government is planning an audit on the operations and finances of an advisory council for African-Canadian education in the province.

The Education Department says reviews done last year and in 2010 have raised questions over use of funding and governance practices by the Council of African Canadian Education.

The province says a review completed this summer found the Halifax-based council was operating outside its legislative mandate. The review also found reporting structures are applied inconsistently and without proper documentation. It says there are inconsistencies in financial reporting.

The council could not be reached for comment on the province's review and the plans for the audit next year. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Virgo invites fans 'along for the ride'

Miniseries. Director of N.S.-filmed Book of Negroes talks about search for lead actress, challenge of story spanning decades

 **HALEY RYAN**
haley.ryan@metronews.ca

Clement Virgo wasn't sure he even wanted to read the Book of Negroes.

Virgo, who directed and co-wrote the miniseries of the same name alongside author Lawrence Hill, said it was hard to get past the title before he realized it was referencing a real document that listed the names of black people who helped the British in the Revolutionary War.

"What brought me to the story is the main character, Aminata Diallo," the Canadian director said in an interview from Toronto. "She's a terrific heroine and her voice and her journey really ... made me want to spend four years trying to bring her to the screen."

His "No. 1 challenge" was finding someone who had the right acting chops, could embody Aminata's vulnerability and strength while playing both young and old — and he enjoyed spending nearly every scene with, Virgo said.

"Once we found Aunjanue Ellis ... I was quite relieved," he said.

Although the book was released as *Someone Knows My Name* in the United States, where there has been a more "turbulent history" around race, Virgo said the miniseries will air as the Book of



Clement Virgo on the set of his miniseries, which begins airing Jan. 7 on CBC Television. JEFF HARPER/METRO

Negroes on BET and the title should be a "non-issue" once people know its historical roots.

Although the book was originally supposed to be turned into a feature film, Virgo said some of the most "visually interesting" work right now is on TV, and the book's dense material fits better in a miniseries than crammed into a movie.

Working with Hill in adapting the book was easy

because he was "not precious" about his novel and was open to compressing some aspects of the book while keeping it historically accurate, Virgo said.

Virgo said he tried to focus on what he felt was important to the story and making Hill happy, while forgetting about fans of the book "looking over my shoulder."

"I was just trying to be truthful, and emotionally engaged, and hopefully they'll

come along for the ride," he said.

The "genius" of Hill's story is how he thrust a Forrest Gump-like character into the history of slavery, the American Revolution, segregated settlements in Nova Scotia, and the journey back to Africa without it seeming like a lecture, Virgo said.

As Canadians watch the series, Virgo said, he hopes they realize no matter where you come from, or who you

Quoted

"It's a very factual story that is moving."

Director Clement Virgo on The Book of Negroes

are, you can overcome anything life throws at you.

"That's what Aminata represents: perseverance and resilience in the face of a lot of hardship," he said.

Getting into character

Gossett Jr. on the strong spirit of Daddy Moses

Like his character's biblical namesake, Lou Gossett Jr. leads his people out of hardship and across the ocean to find their homeland by keeping up hope. Gossett, an American actor whose career spans five decades and includes *An Officer and a Gentleman* and the TV series *Roots*, plays preacher Daddy Moses in the Book of Negroes miniseries.

"I'm drawn to his spirit," Gossett said with a warm smile on the film set in Shelburne, N.S. "Faith is tested at its most when things are tough. That's how you grow."

Gossett said he didn't know the story before reading the script but has done book adaptations before, and appreciates "the challenge." Although Daddy Moses has a sense of humour and there are many light moments in the miniseries, Gossett said portraying the story of slavery touched him deeply. "My emotions are available, so when it happens, it happens on camera," he said.

HALEY RYAN/METRO



Lou
Gossett Jr.
GETTY IMAGES



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Magnotta guilty of murder, jury finds

Life imprisonment. Luka

Rocco Magnotta also convicted of four other non-murder charges

Luka Rocco Magnotta remained impassive as one of the 12 jurors who deliberated his fate uttered the word "guilty" to all five charges against him in the slaying and dismemberment of Jun Lin, including first-degree murder.

Magnotta was later sentenced to life imprisonment on the murder charge, with no chance of applying for parole for 25 years.

On the four non-murder charges, the native of Scarborough, Ont., was given the maximum terms allowed under the Criminal Code, ranging from two to 10 years. The sentences are concurrent.

His lawyer, Luc Leclair, told reporters his client was "disappointed" but "relieved."

Impact statement

"I had come to learn what happened to my son that night and I leave without a true or a complete answer. I had come to see remorse, to hear some form of apology, and I leave without anything."

Daniel Urbas reading an impact statement from Diran Lin, father of Jun Lin

Crown prosecutor Louis Bouthillier said he was fully expecting the jury to deliver the five guilty verdicts.

After the verdicts, a lawyer read out an impact statement on behalf of Lin's father, Diran Lin, who watched proceedings throughout the trial from a private room in the courthouse.

"I had come to see your trial system to see justice done and I leave satisfied that you have not let my son down," Daniel

Urbas told the emotionally charged room.

The other charges Magnotta was convicted of were criminally harassing Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other members of Parliament; mailing obscene and indecent material; committing an indignity to a body; and publishing obscene materials.

Magnotta was seeking to be found not criminally responsible in the May 2012 slaying by way of mental disorder, with experts testifying he was in a psychotic state the night of the killing and couldn't tell right from wrong.

The Crown countered the crime was both planned and deliberate and that Magnotta's behaviour and actions went against someone supposedly suffering from a disease of the mind.

As Magnotta had admitted to the physical acts, the jury's task was to determine his state of mind at the time.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Marking a century since Christmas truce

The Parliament Buildings in Ottawa are shown with Christmas lights on Monday. Dr. Andrea McCrady, who is the Dominion Carillonneur, will be among 11 countries' carillonneurs playing Silent Night on Dec. 24 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Christmas truce during the war. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

DECEMBER 27TH
BOXING DAY
SALE Sunnyside **SALE**
MAJA'S SARAJ BAKERY | DESIGNER SHADES PLUS KIOSK | BEDAZZLED
WIRELESS WAVE | BIB 'N TUCKER | INDIGO SPIRIT | BLOSSOM SHOPS
ALL DRESSED UP | STATEMENT | CAZZA PETITE | ZACK'S | WICKER
EMPORIUM | SILKEN LINGERIE | THE RUNNING ROOM | CRISTALL WINE
MERCHANTS | STOKES | NATURALIZER | KODO | CUCINA MODERNA
BOSO BAMBOO BOUTIQUE | NYGARD | EB GAMES | THE BODY SHOP
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Waterfront Development

Diamonds, rings in donation kettle

And a \$24,000 gift.

A widow offered wedding rings to Salvation Army; what ensued is the stuff of a perfect Christmas flick

What started with a widow quietly dropping her wedding rings into a Salvation Army donation kettle has spawned spontaneous acts of jewelry generosity this holiday season.

Boston's feel-good Christmas story took a new twist this week when an anonymous donor originally from Australia placed a diamond-encrusted

Christmas spirit

"There's something special happening here in Boston."

Salvation Army Capt. Myron Smith, who found a diamond-encrusted pendant while emptying a kettle outside a supermarket. Earlier this month, a widow donated her wedding rings.

cross pendant valued at \$1,800 in one of the charity's trademark red kettles.

The donor said she was inspired by a widow who gave her wedding and diamond engagement rings earlier this month and asked that the proceeds be used to buy toys for poor children. That was followed by another widow who

donated \$21,000 — 10 times what the rings were worth — so she could return the donated

jewelry to the original owner. The Salvation Army said Tuesday the Australian woman donated her pendant to thank Bostonians for their warm welcome when she and her son recently relocated to the city.

It was accompanied by a note that read: "I needed to find somewhere for us, particularly my son, to be happy again.... Since relocating, people have been so warm, friendly, kind and accommodating to us, and

I have been trying to think of a way to give back to the people of Boston."

The donor said she was trying to figure out how best to help the poor when she saw news accounts of the widow who gave her rings in memory of her late husband.

"This inspired me, and I have enclosed this diamond cross, which is symbolic of Christmas, and ask that you sell it and use the money to help those less fortunate this Christmas," the unidentified Australian wrote.

The Salvation Army said the two widows plan to meet before Christmas so the original rings can be returned.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Christmas story. Leg lamp theft baffles all

Who took the leg lamp belonging to Ralphie's "Old Man" from a New York store's annual tribute to *A Christmas Story*?

The owner of the Yankee Spirits liquor store in North Tonawanda says his annual window display honouring the holiday classic includes memorabilia from the 1983 film, including several versions of the now-iconic leg lamp.

Surveillance video shows a

man grabbing a large leg lamp and leaving.

Store owner Gary Brennan tells Buffalo's WIVB-TV even his customers are angry about it.

In the movie, Ralphie's father wins a prize that turns out to be a garish lamp in the shape of a woman's leg in a fishnet stocking. Ralphie's mother "accidentally" breaks it, leaving the Old Man heartbroken.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mideast. Pope urges tiny Christian populace to stay

Pope Francis is urging Mideast Christians to remain in the land of Christ's birth, despite "previously unimaginable" attacks against them by extremists.

In a Christmas greeting released Tuesday, Francis said the presence of the tiny Christian community in the Middle East is more important than any service the church can provide.

He said he hopes to visit in person, but that for now he

wants to write to provide words of comfort and solidarity.

The pope condemned trafficking in weapons and demanded that Muslim religious leaders condemn attacks against religious minorities and using religion to justify them.

He said: "May the trials which you are presently enduring strengthen the faith and the fidelity of each and all of you!"

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In pictures: Different takes on Christmas



1 Church of the Nativity. Tear gas canisters as Xmas ornaments

A Palestinian dressed up as Santa hangs tear gas canisters on a Christmas tree, outside the Church of the Nativity, in the West Bank city of Bethlehem, Tuesday.

MAJDI MOHAMMED/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2 Romania. Bear furs and holiday season performances

Children from Doftanea, northern Romania, some wearing bear furs, dance while performing a holiday season ritual in Bucharest, Romania, Tuesday. VADIM GHIRDA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 Marseille. Santa Claus, the giant

People walk past a giant luminous Santa Claus in Marseille, France, Tuesday. CLAUDE PARIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASTE COLLECTION NOTICE GARBAGE/ORGANICS/RECYCLABLES

New Year's Day

Please be advised that there will be no garbage, organics or recyclables collection services on New Year's Day, Thursday January 1st, 2015. Collection services for that day will be provided the following Saturday January 3, 2015.

Collection Services can begin as early as 7am. To ensure collection please place materials curbside the evening prior to collection day.

No Collection New Year's Day Thursday, January 1st, 2015	→	Collection will occur the following Saturday, January 3rd, 2015
Otter Lake Facility Closed Sunday, December 28th & Thursday, January 1st, 2015	→	Otter Lake Facility Open December 24th & 31st, 7am - 6pm December 26th & January 2nd 7am - 7pm
HRM Recycling Plant Closed Thursday, January 1st	→	HRM Recycling Plant Open December 31st & January 2nd 7:30am - 6pm
Household Special Waste Depot Closed Saturday, December 27th & January 3rd	→	Household Special Waste Depot Open Saturday, January 10th 9am - 4pm



The Interview release back on for Xmas

A large poster advertising the movie The Interview hangs on the back wall of the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema Tuesday in Houston. Sony Pictures Entertainment announced Tuesday a limited theatrical release of The Interview beginning Thursday, putting back into the theatres the comedy that prompted an international incident with North Korea and outrage over its cancelled release. PAT SULLIVAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. might lift ban on gay blood donors

31-year-old policy.

FDA favours new policy barring donations from men who have had gay sex in the previous year

U.S. health officials are recommending an end to America's lifetime ban on blood donations from gay and bisexual men, a 31-year-old policy that many medical groups and gay activists say is no longer justified.

The Food and Drug Administration said Tuesday it favours replacing the blanket ban with a new policy barring donations from men who have had gay sex in the previous year. FDA officials said that policy is supported by research and would put the U.S. in line with other countries including Australia, Japan and Britain.

The lifetime ban dates from the early years of the AIDS crisis and was intended to protect the

blood supply from what was a then little-understood disease. But many medical groups, including the American Medical Association, say the policy is no longer supported by science, given advances in HIV testing. Gay activists say the lifetime ban is discriminatory and perpetuates negative stereotypes of homosexual men.

The agency will recommend the switch in draft guidelines early next year and move to finalize them after taking comments from the public, said FDA officials. FDA Deputy Director Dr. Peter Parks declined to give a time frame for completing the process but said, "we commit to working as quickly as possible on this issue."

All blood donations are screened for HIV; however, the test only detects the virus after it's been in the bloodstream about 10 days. That allows a brief window when the virus that causes AIDS can go undetected. According to government figures, men who have had sex with other men repre-

sent about two per cent of the U.S. population, yet account for at least 62 per cent of all new HIV infections in the U.S.

Tuesday's announcement is the culmination of years of government discussions re-examining the ban. Last month a panel of blood safety experts convened by Department of Health and Human Services voted 16-2 in favour of doing away with the lifetime ban. The panel recommended moving to a one-year ban, which bars donors who have had male-on-male sex during the previous 12 months.

Some gay activists said Tuesday that policy remains unrealistic and will still stigmatize gay and bisexual men.

"Some may believe this is a step forward, but in reality, requiring celibacy for a year is a de facto lifetime ban," the organization Gay Men's Health Crisis, a New York-based nonprofit that supports AIDS prevention and care, said after the announcement.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

May your season be full of glad tidings
and your paper gift wrap be free of
ribbons, bows, and ornaments, and
be placed in your recycling.

The holidays don't have to be wasteful.

For tips on how to properly sort your holiday waste, visit halifax.ca/recycle.

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NATURAL GAS
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Powdered caffeine

FDA sounds alarm over lethal java

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is building a legal case against companies that sell pure powdered caffeine, attractive to teens for its perceived energy boost. Even a teaspoon of the powder can be lethal — it is equivalent to 25 cups of coffee. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Burn injury reports

Keurig recalling 7M coffee makers

Keurig is recalling seven million single-serve coffee brewing machines sold in the United States and Canada between 2009 and last July because of reports of burn injuries. Keurig says its Mini Plus Brewing Systems can overheat and spray water during brewing. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Experts bet on Boxing Day

Black Friday's impact.

Despite deals in November, Canadians still expected to seek post-Christmas sales

Boxing Day has traditionally been a bonanza for bargain hunters, but will earlier Black Friday promotions put a dent in post-Christmas sales in Canada?

Ian Lee, assistant professor with the Sprott School of Business at Ottawa's Carleton University, said while the Black Friday phenomenon has extended the holiday shopping season until the week of Boxing Day, it is not generating net new sales.

"As they introduce and extend these sales, people become more cynical.... I think consumers understand intuitively the Boxing Day week sales are going to be better deals," he said.

Some retailers are already getting a jump on offering end-of-year bargains. Amazon.ca announced plans to feature new Boxing Day deals daily beginning Tuesday until Dec. 29, while Best Buy will launch its Boxing Day sale online on Christmas Eve.

Adrienne Down Coulson,

Shopping plans

An online survey commissioned by cash-back shopping site Ebates.ca found that about 40 per cent of Canadians plan to shop on Boxing Day.

- Most shoppers were planning to buy clothing (69 per cent) followed by electronics (63 per cent), said general manager Adrienne Down Coulson.
- When the same question was posed about Black Friday and Cyber Monday in November, the categories were reversed.

general manager of cash-back shopping site Ebates.ca, said while participating in Black Friday and Cyber Monday promotions is "much less optional" for Canadian companies today, she doesn't foresee a huge impact on Boxing Day.

"Boxing Day is still one of the biggest shopping days, if not the biggest shopping day, in Canada. So as a retailer, they've got to be aggressive if they're going to compete," she said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS, WITH FILES FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RedFlagDeals

Go to RedFlagDeals.com to find all the biggest Boxing Day deals and flyers!

Boxing Day is coming — and RedFlagDeals.com can help! We've got thousands of deals from hundreds of stores plus all the information you need to save money and make smart, savvy purchases. Visit RedFlagDeals.com before you shop and you'll save more money than you can even imagine.

If you're on the go, download the app at www.redflagdeals.com/info/mobile/

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Where Canadians Save



Gifts of Christmas past

Collector Dianne Adcock carries out three Cabbage Patch Kids from circa 1980 after they received a bath at Babyland General Hospital, the birthplace of Cabbage Patch Kids, in Cleveland, Ga. Thirty years after they sparked a nationwide frenzy, Cabbage Patch Kids still have avid fans. Newer hand-stitched dolls start at about \$225 US, but dolls dating to before the mass-market frenzy can sell for tens of thousands of dollars. **DAVID GOLDMAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

VOICES

TIME TO END CHILD POVERTY

Activist brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger explain that while Canada is a more prosperous country now than ever before, poverty levels have also never been higher

The number of Canadian children who depend on food banks every month could fill 6,200 school buses. And we would need a line of buses stretching almost 300 kilometres long for all the children in this country who live in poverty. Those are staggering figures in a country as wealthy as ours.

Every child on those buses has a different story. There's a boy whose single mother works two jobs, struggling just to pay the bills in East Vancouver. A child of an immigrant family in Toronto's Regent Park, who came here with nothing. A girl on the Attawapiskat First Nations reserve in northern Ontario, living in a tiny house with no heat or clean water, and who only just got a proper school this year.

The rate of child poverty in Canada has in-

creased since 1989 when our federal government voted unanimously to wipe it out by 2000. Twenty-five years later, more than 1.3 million Canadian children live below the poverty line.

The number of Canadians who rely on food banks grows every year. Almost 100 First Nations communities face drinking water advisories, and as many as 48 communities still lack a school. In the north, we've seen three families crammed into a small house, sleeping shoulder to shoulder on the floor. The same is often true of new immigrant families who arrive in our urban centres and share tiny apartments.

Our country has seen extraordinary economic growth, and at the same time deepening inequality.

If we believe every Canadian child deserves

the same fair chance to thrive, we need to ask how we give them that.

From Ecuador to India, in our international work we find that fighting child poverty is mostly about meeting families' most basic needs like food, clean water and education. Those challenges exist here. But in Canada, the problem is more complex than simply building a school, or putting food on the table.

In part, it's about empowering people to change their own lives.

Given the opportunity and the tools, young Canadians in low-income communities have an incredible capacity to make positive change—for themselves, their families and their neighbours. We've learned that working with youth in urban neighbourhoods like Toronto's Regent

Park, and with aboriginal youth in our Sacred Circle program. When young Canadians in these communities take on a service project—tackling issues like drug abuse or youth suicide—in the process of helping others they help themselves. Still, as Canadians we need to ask ourselves, what kind of country do we want to live in? Do we want a Canada where every child has the opportunity to succeed? If so, it's time to come up with a plan that will fulfil the promise we made 25 years ago to end child poverty.

Brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger founded a platform for social change that includes the international charity Free The Children, the social enterprise Me to We and the youth empowerment movement We Day.

We asked you:

What's the nicest thing a stranger has ever done for you?*

Just in time for Christmas, we asked people from around the country to share their stories of random acts of kindness:



**Andrea Juby,
Vancouver**

While I was looking for a new apartment this fall, my current building manager—who was a stranger to me at the time—offered to hold a beautiful light-filled studio for a whole month until I was ready to move in. She said, "We don't want to bankrupt you before Christmas!" I walked away on air, I was so moved. That immense kindness created a real sense of home for me. I am so grateful to her and I look forward to my opportunity to pay that kindness forward.



**Ena Goquiolay,
Calgary**

When my family and I migrated to Canada in 2001, we didn't know anybody. A newly immigrated Filipino family, who my parents only knew by referral from mutual friends back home, picked us up from the airport and offered us a room in their small apartment until my parents could find a basement to rent. They drove us to government offices and garage sales. Their kids lent us their toys and showed us around the neighbourhood. Fourteen years later, we consider these once strangers part of our family.



**Brittney Skrypec,
Winnipeg**

I went to (a coffee shop) to get gift cards for work, and the barista asked me if I was getting anything. I said no and she told me not to worry about it. "It's on us," she said. I'm glad I got it for free, it was so nice of her! Now every time I see her, I think of that time she made my day.



**Renata Tracy,
Toronto ***

Someone—
their name was Aris—once rode their bike from Montreal to Toronto to see me for one day.

Editor's note: Aris was not a stranger to Renata. That probably would have been creepy. There was a misunderstanding in Toronto about which question to ask, but this answer was so nice we thought we'd use it anyway :)



**Stephen
Freedman,
Ottawa**

I asked a stranger for help once when my phone died. He was kind enough to let me use my phone to call my mom. She was supposed to pick me up and I was supposed to tell her where. I was downtown. There would have been a lot of confusion if I didn't call.



**Qian Giang,
Halifax**

I crossed Spring Garden and just lost my (wallet) and another person helped me pick up my (wallet) and return to me.

Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON
THE WORLD OF
CELEBRITIES



Amy Adams GETTY IMAGES

Amy Adams on the outs with Today over Sony scandal

It was just supposed to be a simple morning talk-show appearance for Amy Adams to promote her latest film, *Big Eyes*, and do a victory lap after her impressive Saturday Night Live hosting duty, but instead we have yet another repercussion of the Sony hacking scandal.

Adams was reportedly in the Today show green room, ready to go on the air, when she was told she would be asked to comment on the Sony scandal.

"Amy said she didn't want to contribute to the media coverage of it ... then she was abruptly told that her interview with Today was cancelled. She was shocked and upset," a source tells Page Six.

Another source, though, saw her as a bit more than "shocked and upset," claiming that Adams "was angry and acting belligerent, she was yelling at Today producers and reduced a young female staffer to tears." Guess

she did learn a thing or two from working with David O. Russell after all.

Probably the most entertaining part of all of this is the NBC spokesperson's statement explaining that "as a news program, the Today show doesn't allow guests to put restrictions on interviews."

Oh man. First of all, that's total bull. And second of all, it's so cute that you think of yourself as a news program. Adorable.



Matthew
McConaughey
GETTY IMAGES

Alright, alright, aw shucks! Man wakes from coma thinking he's McConaughey

You think you know what disappointment feels like? Try being the British man who came out of a six-day coma in 2012 thinking he was Matthew McConaughey. "When I went to the toilet I went to look in the mirror and I was shocked because I didn't look like him, I didn't know what I was looking at," British car accident survivor Rory Curtis tells the Telegraph. "At times I was in hospital thinking, 'I can't wait to get out of here and back to filming movies.' I was convinced I was him and that I had his good looks as well. I know it

was hopeful thinking, really. Yeah, but just imagine how bummed he'd be if this had happened after McConaughey's Oscar win.

Also, Curtis says he came out of the coma speaking fluent French, a language that he'd never studied and that, to my knowledge, McConaughey doesn't speak either.

"I was sitting there spouting a foreign language from my hospital bed, acting all French in their sort of arrogant yet sophisticated way," he says. Sounds charming.

Breaking! Frozen turned on Emily Blunt's water works

According to Emily Blunt, another adjective that can be applied to Disney's hugely successive animated musical *Frozen* is "labour-inducing." Blunt tells E! News that she watched the film just a day before she and husband John Krasinski welcomed daughter Hazel into the world. "Isn't that crazy? There was nothing on and I was like, 'Do you think this will be good?' And John indulged me and we went to see it," she says. As for when they got to the iconic Let it Go ditty? "I was like, 'I'm about to!'" Blunt remembers. "I'm



Emily Blunt GETTY IMAGES

literally about to let it go." Wait, maybe they shouldn't brag about that.

Berlin fest won't let Fifty Shades wear out welcome

In a move that kind of makes Germany's prestigious Berlinale seem kind of desperate, *Fifty Shades of Grey* will be celebrating its international premiere at the 65th annual edition of the film festival, programmers announced this week. The press release even goes so far as to call the roles of Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan) and Anastasia Steel (Dakota Johnson) "iconic."



Jamie Dornan GETTY IMAGES



Dakota Johnson GETTY IMAGES

Frozen freezes out Swiftie for top entertainer spot

If you have children, or know someone who does, or just listened to one recently, the choice of Associated Press Entertainer of the Year won't come as much of a shock: It's *Frozen*, and in 2014, we just couldn't let it go.

Although the animated film



opened late in 2013, the story of Elsa, Anna, Olaf, Kristoff and Sven easily outpaced other vote-getters like Sherlock star Benedict Cumberbatch, TV guru Shonda Rhimes, musicians Beyoncé and Pharrell Williams, and even an entry for the culture's fixation on the female rear.

In 47 ballots submitted by members and subscribers of the AP, *Frozen* won 12 votes. Taylor Swift had eight. Matthew McConaughey and Jimmy Fallon were tied for third with seven votes each. Voters were asked to consider who had the most influence on entertainment and culture in 2014. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Frozen's Elsa and Anna CONTRIBUTED

In theatres Christmas Day

Mystery & Suspense



The Imitation Game

Director: Morten Tyldum

Stars: Benedict Cumberbatch, Keira Knightley

During the winter of 1952, British authorities entered the home of mathematician, cryptanalyst and war hero Alan Turing to investigate a reported burglary. They ended up arresting Turing himself on charges of 'gross indecency', that would lead to his conviction for the criminal offense of homosexuality — little did officials know they were incriminating the pioneer of computing.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 86% Audience: 98%



Kids/Family



Into the Woods

Director: Sean Anders

Stars: Meryl Streep, Emily Blunt, James Corden

Into the Woods is a modern twist on several of the beloved Brothers Grimm fairy tales, intertwining the plots of a few choice stories and exploring the consequences of the characters' wishes and quests. This humorous and heartfelt musical follows the classic tales of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Rapunzel.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 71% Audience: 97%



Drama



Big Eyes

Director: Tim Burton

Stars: Amy Adams, Christoph Waltz

Directed and produced by Tim Burton, Big Eyes is based on the true story of Walter Keane (Christoph Waltz), who was one of the most successful painters of the 1950s and early 1960s. The artist earned staggering notoriety by revolutionizing the commercialization and accessibility of popular art with his enigmatic paintings of waifs with big eyes.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 72% Audience: 95%



Drama



Unbroken

Director: Angelina Jolie

Stars: Jack O'Connell, Domhnall Gleeson

Academy Award winner Angelina Jolie directs and produces Unbroken, following the incredible life of Olympian and war hero Louis "Louie" Zamperini (Jack O'Connell) who, along with two other crewmen, survived in a raft for 47 days after a near-fatal plane crash in the Second World War, only to be caught by the Japanese Navy and sent to a prisoner-of-war camp.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 48% Audience: 96%



Drama



Wild

Director: Jean-Marc Vallee

Stars: Reese Witherspoon, Kevin Rankin

With the dissolution of her marriage and the death of her mother, Cheryl Strayed has lost all hope. After years of reckless, destructive behaviour, she makes a rash decision. With absolutely no experience, driven only by sheer determination, Cheryl hikes more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, alone.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 71% Audience: 95%



Mystery/Drama



The Gambler

Director: Rupert Wyatt

Stars: Mark Wahlberg

Jim Bennett (Mark Wahlberg) is a risk taker. Both an English professor and a high-stakes gambler, Bennett bets it all when he borrows from a gangster (Michael Kenneth Williams) and offers his own life as collateral. Always one step ahead, Bennett pits his creditor against the operator of a gambling ring (Alvin Ing) and leaves his dysfunctional relationship with his wealthy mother.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 62% Audience: 94%



Joshua Jackson's never had it so Golden

Television. The Affair star is grateful for a cable schedule that gives him time to live his life

 **NED EHRBAR**
Metro in Hollywood

Joshua Jackson's latest show, The Affair, wrapped up its first 10-episode season Sunday night, but de-

spite the series' success and critical acclaim — including three Golden Globe nominations — he understands if you still think of other work he's done when you see him.

"Depending on where you are in the world, Pacey left a mark, and I'm 36 years old now. That's a long time ago," Jackson says of his breakout Dawson's Creek role.

"Frankly even before that, (there was) The Mighty Ducks. Maybe not in the rest

of the world, but for Canada, I still walk around as the bearded old man that I am now and have nine-year-olds who are like, 'Charlie! Oh my God, what's going on?'

It may seem jarring to hear a 36-year-old call himself an old man — and Jackson mentions his age often enough to suggest it's on his mind a lot — but keep in mind his first Mighty Ducks film came out nearly 23 years ago. And Dawson's

Creek? Just celebrated its 16th birthday.

"I look back on those years very fondly, and obviously that was a life-changing event for me. I was already a working actor, but now it was a career arc rather than something that I was a doing when I was a kid," he says. "Yes, I do feel old sometimes."

But with age comes wisdom, and for Jackson the 10-episode structure of The Affair — and the cable land-

scape in general — was a revelation.

"As a man who's done a lot of seasons of television and frankly just been working for a long, long time — I mean, this is my 25th year in the union, I can't believe that's true, but it's true — what is so lovely about doing 10 episodes is that just at the point which you're tired and you want the season to be done, it's done and then you can go out and live the rest of your life," he says.



Joshua Jackson. CONTRIBUTED



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How-to

Use travel time wisely

1. Use travel time to relax, not to work. Power down and give your brain a break.
2. Load your iPad with that documentary you've been meaning to watch or that video tutorial you haven't had time to wrap your head around.
3. Review a language app of the foreign country you're heading to (quietly, of course). Even 10 simple words and phrases can go a long way — and two of them had better be "please" and "thank you."
4. Is the flight attendant/tour guide handing out local newspapers? Brush up on the news of the day at your destination, so you'll have something to add to the local chit-chat.
5. Never forget this all-important travel rule, whether you're on a plane, train or bus: Sleep when you can.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO

New

Westin facelift at Tremblant

Calling all ski bums: Le Westin Resort & Spa, Tremblant, Que., has recently completed a major reno. All 122 guest rooms have been redone, as has the more than 4,000 square feet of meeting space, the lobby and the front desk, spruced up with a living green wall. Expect natural wood details, earthy colours, warm fabrics and lots of big, big windows. Recharge the batteries, then hit the slopes — and repeat. Visit StarwoodHotels.com.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO

Deal

Escape to Portugal

Beat the winter blahs by heading to the Algarve. Gateways International is offering 14 days in Albufeira, Portugal, including hotel and airfare from Toronto, from \$1,775 (taxes included) for travel between Jan. 1 and March 31. Because this deal is based on availability, you can get a little more flexibility with dates, and with airfare being the bulk of the cost, you could stay an extra week for peanuts if you wanted to. Call 800-268-0900.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO



The hot destinations of 2015

Make a list. Here's a rundown of accessible and fascinating trips to plan next year

See Cuba before it changes. Check out the World Expo in Milan. And if you're heading to New York City to see the view from One World Trade Center's observatory (scheduled to open late spring), take the subway to Queens and see if you can figure out why it topped Lonely Planet's "best in the U.S." destinations for 2015.

Europe

The Milan Expo opens in May for six months and is expected to draw 20 million visitors. The Expo is the modern incarnation of the old World's Fairs that thrilled 19th- and 20th-century guests with new products and technology.

The theme of the Milan Expo is food and nutrition, and dozens of countries are participating. The U.S. will do its part by sending six authentic food trucks to Italy featuring regional American and ethnic fusion menus. Milan's famous opera house, La Scala, normally closed in the summer, will host performances daily during the Expo.

Anniversaries

Singapore celebrates its golden Jubilee — 50 years of independence from Great Britain. Vietnam celebrates 70 years since achieving independence from France, and 50 years since the first U.S. combat troops arrived at Da Nang, which some historians say marked the start of the Vietnam War — even though Americans had been sent to the country in prior years.



The One World Trade observatory is expected to open in late spring 2015. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A number of U.S. museums and historic sites will be hosting exhibits and events to mark 150 years since the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the end of the Civil War.

The new year also marks 70 years since the end of Second World War — both the defeat of Nazi Germany and the atomic bombing of Japan that ended the war in Asia. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are planning memorial services on the August anniversaries of the bombings, along with numerous arts projects and peace-themed events throughout the year.

In New Orleans, Aug. 29 will be the 10-year anniversary of the devastation of hurricane Katrina. "Come see the new New Orleans" is the tourist industry mantra for showcasing trendy emerging neighbourhoods and a vibrant restaurant scene.

South Dakota expects crowds for the 50th Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup in September and the 75th



Head over to South Dakota for the Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup in September. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in August.

Cuba

The news that the U.S. intends to normalize relations with Cuba could lead to a rush of travellers hoping to experience the island before it loses its frozen-in-time culture to an onslaught of U.S. chain stores, hotels and tourists. But don't pack your bags

just yet: For the near future, the only way you can legally visit Cuba as an American citizen is to take a "people to people" cultural exchange tour licensed by the U.S. government. The tours are expensive and itineraries are limited.

Theme Parks

Universal Studios Hollywood debuts two new attractions in

New York City

Two big openings take place in the Big Apple in 2015: the observatory at One World Trade in late spring and the new Whitney Museum of American Art in May in Manhattan's Meatpacking District near the High Line and the Hudson River. The city also got a Christmas gift from Lonely Planet, which named the borough of Queens as a "best in the U.S." destination. Manhattan has been giving ground to trendy Brooklyn in recent years, but the elevation of Queens as the next big thing was a bit of a surprise. Not that New Yorkers and tourists alike don't love Queens attractions like the 1964 World's Fair grounds, the hipster beach scene in the Rockaways, Chinatown in Flushing, the Asian and Latin American ethnic mix in Jackson Heights and the emerging industrial-chic ambience of Long Island City. But the borough is not quite on tourist radars yet — though the Lonely Planet pronouncement may change that.

2015: Springfield, an immersive area opening in spring surrounding The Simpsons Ride, and Fast & Furious — Supercharged, a thrill ride opening in summer based on the film series.

Disneyland opens Frozen Fun in January in Anaheim, Calif., with a singalong, Olaf's Snow Fest, and meet-and-greets with Anna and Elsa, among other attractions. The California theme park also celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, with celebration details to be revealed at the end of January.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Beaujolais offers two types of wine — red Beaujolais and Beaujolais Blanc. ANDRE PROULX

Beaujolais is one of France's best secrets

Foodie furlough.

Little known to tourists, this spot near Burgundy boasts affordable bottles and delicious dishes

**ANDRE
PROULX**
life@metronews.ca

It's hard to imagine in a country known for wine that there are still areas that have not been invaded by the wine-loving tourist. Nestled between Burgundy and Côtes du Rhône, you find Beaujolais. Beaujolais is a wine region recovering from a bad reputation due to bad Beaujolais Nouveau flooding the market in the late '80s and early '90s. I can assure you that there is much more to Beaujolais than the release of the Nouveau.

The celebration that takes place on the third Thursday in November to celebrate the release of Beaujolais Nouveau is one reason to plan a visit to the group of villages that make up the Beaujolais region. Going in the fall just after harvest means you will have

If you go...

- You are entitled to 1.5L of wine duty-free. Anything over that, expect to pay duty depending on which Canadian province you are entering from France.
- When visiting wineries make sure you call in advance, most wineries work on an appointment basis only.
- When renting a car expect to get a larger class than you would be used to in Canada. When they say compact, they really mean subcompact.

far fewer tourists in the area and booking appointments at wineries will be easier. Going toward the end of November means that most of the hard work from harvest is finished and wine-makers will have some more time to sit down with you and share their wines.

and share their wines.

There are two types of wine you will find in Beaujolais: the traditional familiar red Beaujolais and Beaujolais Blanc. The red is made with the Gamay Noir grape. Gamay is fantastic because



How to stop being afraid of the followup

Career. They've said they'd be in touch, but should you give them a shout in the meantime?

LAUREN MARINIGH
TalentEgg.ca

Knowing how to follow up after an interview can be key to determining if you progress on to the next step in the hiring process.

If you're not the most assertive person, you may be afraid to reach out post-interview. Here are some important steps to follow that can help make the process less intimidating.

Organize details

Often job descriptions will outline how or if they would like you to follow up.

Some jobs will state that only qualified applicants will be contacted, and will strictly outline not to follow up. Make sure you make note of these things as you are sending out applications.

Once you have sent out a followup, make sure to make note of a response

Send the right message

Not knowing what to share in a followup message is a common reason for opting out.

- Don't overthink it. If you're following up on an application, keep your message brief and inquire politely about the opportunity you've applied to. Reiterate your interest and ask if there have been any new developments in the hiring process.
- If you're following up on an interview, it's OK to go into more detail. Make sure to share that you appreciated the opportunity to connect, and bring up a few key discussion topics. Close by adding that you look forward to hearing about the hiring process soon.

you receive. This will be crucial in knowing when to follow up again, or knowing the job status.

There is nothing worse than following up when you've already heard that a position is closed.

Follow up with the appropriate person

Just as when you apply for a job, it's important that your followup be directed to the right person.

If you applied to a general HR email, you can try following up to that email, but chances are you won't hear back.

Try to find the person in charge of hiring for that particular position.

If you apply via LinkedIn, often you will be able to see who posted the job, and that will help identify the right person with whom to follow up.

Know the platform

How should you be following up?

If a position specifically states "No phone calls," follow up with an email.

Email is generally a safer and less invasive bet anyway, as it allows for the hiring manager to reply back

in their own time — and avoids creating an awkward situation.

You don't want to catch someone off-guard or annoy them by not following instructions that were clearly laid out in the first place.

If you have a more casual relationship with someone involved in the hiring process (but not the key decision-maker), you may want to consider using a social media platform (like Twitter) to touch base.

Let it be and give it time

There is a fine line between following up and annoying human resources by being too persistent.

You'll definitely be contacted if you are a promising candidate, so imagine your followup as simply a confirmation of interest and an opportunity to (hopefully) gain more information about your application status in the process.

If you don't hear back from the hiring manager, don't take it personally.

While you may be disappointed that your carefully-crafted application didn't get a response, letting go of your disappointment is the only way to move forward.



Refreshing your inbox repeatedly is only going to result in frustration. If the position is taken down and you still haven't heard back after a few weeks, it's safe to say they are not interested. iSTOCK

It's beginning to look a lot like the work blahs



OFFICE SPACE
Eleni Deacon
life@metrone.ca

Dear Metro,

I get extremely sluggish in the winter. It's so hard to get up in the morning—and even once I'm awake, I still feel like I'm asleep. Everything is just so blah. How can I stay focused at work when all I want to do is crawl under a blanket?

— Want 2 Hibernate

Dear W2H,

If only we could eat a bunch of acorns, then curl up in a cute little ball and nap until April. But humans aren't chipmunks. Even in 20-below weather, we've got to haul our tails to work.

Although you want to park yourself under an afghan, don't. Physical activity—even a little bit each day—can radically energize your system. To stay positive at

work, set a few manageable professional resolutions that will boost your performance without stirring up oh-no-I'm-flunking-my-resolutions anxiety. And give yourself something fun to look forward to on a daily basis.

It could be something big, like a vacation. Or something small, like fancy crackers in your lunch.

Winter slowdown is normal, but if your blahs run really blue, consider seeking treatment for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

Health-care professionals can advise on ways to make the dreary months less dark, both at work and in your off-hours.

The weather outside may be frightful, but the next few months don't have to be totally awful.

Dear Metro,

My boss recently lost it on a colleague for mixing up the numbers in a report. Thing is, my colleague had the wrong numbers because of a silly



It's hard to stay happy when the weather is at its worst, but there are ways to curb your curmudgeonliness. iSTOCK

mistake with my calculations. I know I should confess, but I started this job recently and

I don't want to get off on the wrong foot. How can I absolve my co-worker without

hurting my own career?

— Playing Scruples

Dear PS,

Your biggest mistake is not owning up to your mistake. While small slip-ups don't necessarily need admitting, hiding larger missteps could easily make them worse. In this case, size doesn't matter: someone else shouldn't have to take the blame for your blunder.

Find a way to frame your story so you don't come off like the no-shame new guy who stood idle while Peter got screamed at in his stead.

A small but self-serving white lie—"I just noticed an error in my calculations"—could exonerate your colleague while downplaying your cowardice.

Confessing won't be easy, but facing your faults is a sign of professional maturity.

Clear the air and your conscience, then move forward.

Your boss may be irritated that you made an anger-worthy gaffe in your first stint on the job. But it would be even worse if he found out you were a liar.

Bacon the icing on baked apple pancake

Christmas brunch.

Bacon-apple upside-down pancake delivers a crowd-pleasing salty caramelized crunch

Like Thanksgiving, Christmas is one of those holidays that requires aroma.

On Thanksgiving, we need the house to smell of turkey and stuffing and sweet potatoes. On Christmas, we need whiffs of indulgent breakfast items, like cinnamon rolls or a bubbling fruit crisp. Or maybe you prefer hash browns and bacon. Those get the job done nicely, too.

This year combine sweet and savoury with this baked pancake inspired by an upside-down cake. For ease, it can partially prepped the night before. To do that, just make the batter as directed in a blender, then refrigerate it overnight in the blender carafe. In the morning, just give it a quick whir to freshen it, then you're ready to assemble the pancake.

And that's when things get good. You start by frying bacon in a skillet. Once the bacon is crisp, you top it with a layer of thinly sliced apples. Give those a couple minutes to soften, then you add a hefty sprinkle of brown sugar and cinnamon. Finally, you pour on the batter and pop the whole thing in the oven to finish.

When it's done, you overturn the pancake onto a serving platter and cut it into wedges. You may not need to, but there's no harm in dousing the whole thing with maple syrup.

1. Heat the oven to 375 F.

2. In a blender, combine the



This recipe serves 4. MATTHEW MEAD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

milk, egg, oil and vanilla. Blender until smooth.

3. With the blender running on low, sprinkle in the flour, sugar, baking powder and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Stop blending as soon as the mixture is smooth. Set aside.

4. Use an apple corer or melon baller to core the apple, but leave the fruit intact. Set the apple on its side, then cut it into thin round slices. Set aside.

5. Heat a large oven-safe skillet over medium. Add the bacon and cook for 6 to 7 minutes on one side. Spoon out and discard about half of the fat in the pan, then turn the bacon strips to cook on the other side, laying them flat and evenly over the bottom of the pan.

6. Top the bacon with the apple slices, arranging them evenly. Cover the pan and cook for 2 minutes.

7. Mix together the brown sugar, cinnamon and a pinch of salt, then sprinkle the mixture over the apples.

8. Carefully and evenly pour the pancake batter over the apples and bacon. Place the skillet in the oven and bake until lightly browned and cooked through, about 20 minutes.

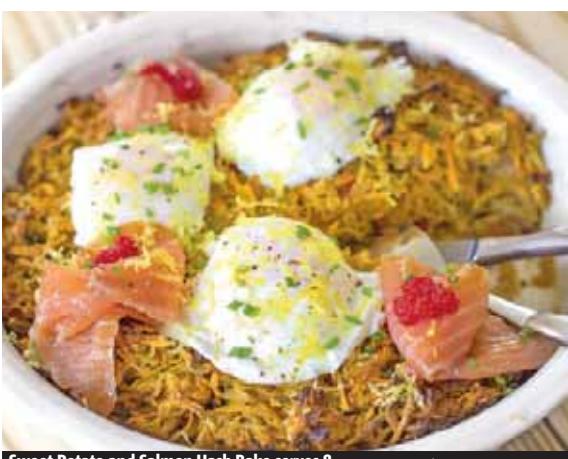
9. Let the pancake cool for 5 minutes. Use a paring knife to loosen the edges of

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup whole milk
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon canola or vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- Kosher salt
- 1 large apple
- 8 strips bacon
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

the pancake, then overturn a large serving plate over the skillet. Invert the skillet to release the pancake onto the plate. Cut into wedges.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Sweet Potato and Salmon Hash Bake serves 8. MATTHEW MEAD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nestle salmon and eggs in sweet potato hash

1. Heat the oven to 400 F. Coat a 3- to 4-quart casserole dish with cooking spray.

Ingredients

- 6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled
- 4 medium Yukon gold potatoes
- 1 cup diced roasted red peppers
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped capers
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 8 ounces smoked salmon
- Sour cream or 8 poached eggs (optional)
- Lemon zest, to serve
- Chopped fresh chives, to serve
- Caviar (optional)

to 8 minutes, or until tender and starting to brown.

3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, grate the sweet potatoes and Yukon gold potatoes. Alternatively, use the medium grating disc on a food processor to shred the potatoes. Either way, grasp the shredded potatoes a handful at a time to squeeze and discard as much liquid as possible, returning the potatoes to the bowl.

4. To the potatoes, add the onion-butter mixture, roasted

red pepper, capers, thyme and a 1/2 teaspoon each of salt and black pepper. Spoon the mixture into the prepared casserole dish. Bake for 50 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender and the top is golden brown.

5. Top the hash with slices of smoked salmon and either dollops of sour cream or poached eggs, if using. Grate fresh lemon zest over the top, then sprinkle with black pepper and chopped chives. Top with caviar, if desired.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Team Canada goaltender Zachary Fucale makes a save against Switzerland during an exhibition game on Tuesday in Montreal. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fucale flawless in final tune-up game

World juniors. Domi nets hat trick as Canada shuts out Switzerland

Max Domi scored a hat trick to lead Canada to a 6-0 victory over Switzerland on Tuesday in the final pre-tournament game before the start of the world junior championship.

Domi scored twice in 13 seconds in the second period before completing his hat trick midway through the third.

Exhibition match

6	0
Canada	Switzerland

Brayden Point, Jake Virtanen and Nick Ritchie also scored for Canada, which went 2-0-1 in its three exhibition matches.

Goalie Zach Fucale, who was recently traded from the Hal

fax Mooseheads to the Quebec Remparts in the QMJHL, made 14 saves for the shutout.

Netminder Ludovic Waeber stopped 37 of 43 shots for Switzerland, which finished 0-2-0 in its exhibition games.

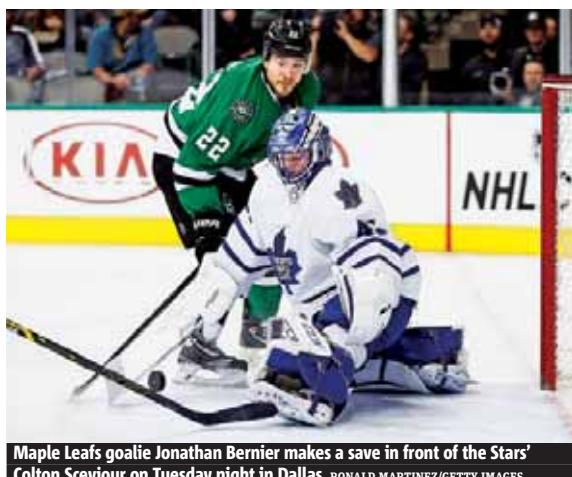
With Canada already up 1-0, Domi scored his first of the evening on the power play at 15:46 of the second period. The Swiss defencemen gave Domi far too much time with the puck, as the 19-year-old skated towards the net with ease and found an opening between Waeber's pads.

With the Bell Centre public address announcer still belting out the details of Domi's goal, the Arizona Coyotes prospect quickly made it 3-0 for Canada as he deflected home a pass from Anthony Duclair.

Domi completed the hat trick in the third period.

Getting the start in Canada's final exhibition game means Fucale will likely get the nod over backup goaltender Eric Comrie when Canada's tournament officially gets underway versus Slovakia on Friday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Maple Leafs goalie Jonathan Bernier makes a save in front of the Stars' Colton Sceviour on Tuesday night in Dallas. RONALD MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

When it came time for the Maple Leafs to climb out of their pre-holiday rut, it was the team's best players leading the way.

Toronto picked up its 20th win of the season — not a bad pre-Christmas total — with a solid 4-0 win Tuesday night over the surging Dallas Stars.

That ended Toronto's three-game losing skid, sending some Christmas cheer to fretting fans.

It helped that the team's players did what they're paid to do, and for the top stars,

On Tuesday

4	0
Maple Leafs	Stars

that means score.

Nazem Kadri had a goal and assist; James van Riemsdyk had a goal and two assists; Tyler Bozak a power-play goal and Phil Kessel, two assists.

NBL Canada

Tubbs leaves Rainmen to play overseas

The Halifax Rainmen are saying goodbye to one of its star players.

The National Basketball League of Canada franchise announced on Tuesday that six-foot-three, 220-pound shooting guard Justin Tubbs has left the team to accept a contract offer to play professionally in Greece.

Tubbs was one of the top scorers on the Rainmen and ranked No. 3 in the entire league for free-throw shooting accuracy at 77.5 per cent.

Halifax returns to action on Friday when it hosts the Saint John Mill Rats at 2 p.m. at Scotiabank Centre.

METRO

NBA

Love conquers former team

Kevin Love scored 20 points in his first game against Minnesota, Kyrie Irving added 29 and the Cleveland Cavaliers pulled away in the second half for a 125-104 victory over the Timberwolves on Tuesday night.

LeBron James added 24 points for the Cavs, now 12-3 since opening 5-7.

Rookie Andrew Wiggins scored 27 against the team that drafted him for the Timberwolves, who dropped their sixth straight and have lost 12 of 13. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leafs' stars shine bright

And goalie Jonathan Bernier, who stopped 43 shots, picked up another win, his quick glove and rebound control in full evidence. Mike Santorelli added an empty netter with 3:51 to go as Dallas pulled out all the stops to try to get one past the Toronto netminder and break the shutout.

The Leafs go into the holiday break with 43 points, good for fourth place in the Atlantic Division and a healthy margin as the first wild-card team in the Eastern Conference playoff race. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MLB

Jays claim pair of hurlers off waivers

The Toronto Blue Jays have claimed left-handed pitcher Scott Barnes off waivers from the Texas Rangers as well as right-hander Preston Guilmet off waivers from the Pittsburgh Pirates.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NFL

Browns likely to start third-string QB in season finale

Browns quarterback Brian Hoyer is not practising because of a sore shoulder, raising the likelihood rookie Connor Shaw will start the season finale at Baltimore.

Hoyer was injured in Sunday's loss at Carolina after he replaced Johnny Manziel, who hurt his hamstring and will not play again this season. Browns coach Mike Pettine has not decided on a starter for this week, but said he does not expect Hoyer, who started Cleveland's first 13 games, to get to 100 per cent in the next few days.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Browns quarterback Brian Hoyer
STREETER LECKA/GETTY IMAGES

Indian Super League

Canadian named player of the year

Canadian international striker Iain Hume has been named player of the year in the Indian Super League.

The 31-year-old Hume had five goals, tied for second in the league.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the hot seat

"I don't look at myself as a three-win coach. I know I'm better than that, yet this is where we're at right now."

New York Jets head coach Rex Ryan still carries confidence despite a poor season.

Harvey succeeds despite high-level growing pains



Canada's Magali Harvey runs with the ball against England's Emily Scarratt at the IRB Women's Rugby World Cup in August. RUGBY CANADA

Rugby. Canadian wing reaps rewards after adjusting attitude

In 2014, Magali Harvey went from wondering why she was playing rugby to being named the world's best player.

In addition to winning IRB Women's Player of the Year honours, the 24-year-old from Quebec City was chosen as a finalist for the International Rugby Players' Association Try of the Year — the only woman nominated — and finished second in scoring at the World Cup.

That's not bad for someone who was still finding her way on the rugby field.

"I definitely did have a roller-coaster year," Harvey said in a recent interview. "During part of the year, I wasn't sure why I was playing rugby. I wasn't sure that I wanted to be in the (Canadian) program."

"It was only once I realized that I was there because I wanted to be there, not because I had to be there, that I started to change my perspective on things. And it definitely helped me step up my game. I just started pushing harder at training and stopped cutting corners in everything I did."

A star player at St. Francis Xavier University, Harvey could rely on her speed and finishing skills. But the five-foot-five, 144-pound back had plenty to learn at the international level.

"It's a big fish in a small

pond kind of scenario," said Canadian women's sevens coach John Tait. "A lot of our players have had that scenario — they've all been the best player on their age-grade teams or the best player at their university or club. Some struggle with it more than others. It's adapting when you're surrounded with other players that are really good as well."

"Mags, before she got here, couldn't pass and thought tackling was grabbing people up around the chest and stuff. And that just doesn't work at this level. If people know you're not going to pass, then you suddenly get two defenders on you instead of one. It's been a growing pain not just for her, but our whole program."

Harvey admits playing for her country has been a challenge.

"I never really had to pass the ball that much," Harvey said. "I never really had to tackle that much."

"So when I got out of university it was definitely a wake-up call." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Girgensons embarrassed to lead all-star vote

Zemgus Girgensons feels a little sheepish discussing how fans back home in Latvia have clicked and quadruple-clicked his name so often that the Sabres forward is running away with the NHL All-Star Game vote.

The second-year player appreciates the overwhelming support he's received from the Baltic nation. And yet the 20-year-old Girgensons doesn't consider himself worthy of being included among the league's elite.

"It's a little bit embarrassing and funny at the same time,"

Voting deadline

With voting set to close Jan. 1, Girgensons is on the verge of clinching a spot to play in the All-Star Game at Columbus on Jan. 25.

Girgensons said, before the Sabres hit the road for a two-game swing that concludes Tuesday at Detroit. "It came out of nowhere. I know people know me back home, but I didn't think it was going to go that far. That's like crazy far."

As of Tuesday, Girgensons has a league-leading 1,291,186 votes, with about 80 per cent coming from Latvia.

Chicago's Patrick Kane (815,990 votes) is second among forwards, followed by teammate Jonathan Toews (803,034).

Blackhawks players hold down the three other remaining spots eligible to be selected by vote: Duncan Keith (790,922) and Brent Seabrook (641,736) lead defencemen, and Corey Crawford (714,471) leads goalies.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



The Sabres' Zemgus Girgensons is the only player with his name on more than a million ballots for the NHL All-Star Game. JEN FULLER/GETTY IMAGES

TOP SIX@6

- 6 Hozier Take Me To Church
- 5 Jessie J ft 2 Chains Burnin' Up
- 4 Meghan Trainor Lips Are Movin'
- 3 Taylor Swift Blank Space
- 2 Sam Smith I'm Not The Only One
- 1 Nick Jonas Jealous

Weeknights at 6 Kat counts down the HOTTEST songs of the day.

101.3 THE BOUNCE



101.3THEBOUNCE.com | Info@101.3thebounce.com

2015 Mazda MX-5
• Type. Two-door, rear-wheel-drive compact sports car
• Engine. 2.0-litre inline four cylinder (167 hp)
• Transmissions. Six-speed manual or automatic
• Price. \$29,450 base (GX), \$42,720 as-tested (anniversary edition)

Market position

Debuted in 1989 and continues to stick to original script of providing the most fun-to-drive roadster for the money. The Miata/MX-5 is the best-selling two-seat sports car in history and now has no direct competitors. It is a spiritual successor to traditional low-cost British roadsters, such as the MGB and TR6.

Points

- 2015 Anniversary Edition the last iteration of current generation. An all-new MX-5 is due out next year.
- The U.S. and Canada each received only 100 copies of the Anniversary Edition, which sold out quickly.
- The only exterior colour combination is Soul Red Mica/Brilliant Black — the latter for the retractable hardtop.



The power hardtop roof is slick, but the manual top is easy to use.

Safety features

Stability and traction control, four-wheel disc brakes with anti-lock and electronic brake force distribution, limited slip differential, anti-theft alarm, engine immobilizer theft deterrent, front and side airbags, seat-belt pretensioners with force limiter, side impact door beams, fog lights, Xenon headlights.

Just don't mess with success

PHOTOS: MIKE GOETZ



Review. With a new MX-5 on the horizon, let's hope Mazda sticks with its Miata formula for fun and affordability

MIKE
GOETZ
drive@metronews.ca

Nobody rocks the concept of a fun and affordable two-seat roadster quite like Mazda. Then again, nobody else really tries anymore.

And who could blame them? Why invest in a separate platform, which is hard to share with other vehicles, for a shrinking pool of buyers?

These cars don't exude the prestige they used to in North America and Europe, as crossovers continue their unrelenting path to complete

vehicle domination. And there isn't much demand for them in China and other emerging markets, perhaps defeated by concerns about the weather, traffic and pollution, and a preference among the rich to be chauffeured rather than drive themselves around.

All of which makes the MX-5 even more precious to those of us who still enjoy driving.

From its inception in 1990, the Miata was conceived as a car to provide the most driving joy per dollar, by keeping engine size and power in check, and concentrating on lightness, balance, driver feedback and simplicity.

And although the car was renamed the MX-5 in 2006, Mazda hasn't strayed from the script since, including the all-new 2016 MX-5, which is waiting in the wings.

Compared to most every-



The cabin is tight but cosy, with miniature controls and little storage space.

thing else on the road, the Miata/MX-5 is a small and precise gem. And the 2015 25th-anniversary edition is even more gem-like, with some elegant cosmetic touches, and a knockout Soul Red Mica paint job.

With just 100 anniversary editions available in Canada,

they sold out months ago, but you can still buy the equally impressive 2014 GT model.

The MX-5 offers very light and agile handling. The 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine likes to rev, but takes premium fuel. Its 167 horsepower are not overwhelm-



Compare

1 BMW Z4
Base price: \$56,395
Good looking and powerful, but not visceral.



2 Porsche Boxster
Base price: \$59,685
Good looking and powerful, and very visceral.



3 Nissan 370Z Roadster
Base price: \$51,238
Excellent bits don't seem to add up to an engaging experience.

ing, but everything feels faster when you're this low and connected to the pavement. And the manual gearbox is one of the most satisfying to use in autodom.

The ride is not as stiff as you might expect, because it doesn't need a stiff suspension for handling, but it is a bit noisy on the highway.

The cabin is tight, but cosy, with miniature controls and little storage space. Your legs go straight out, with no bend to the knee.

The optional power hardtop roof is slick, but the manual top is super light and easy to use. The trunk is small but surprisingly useful.

Net result: The MX-5 is one very fine, two-seat, convertible sports car.

5
DRIVE

There's nothing cuckoo about coconut coir

Driving Force. Fibres found between the shell and the nut is used for many things, including soaking up oil spills

JIL
MCINTOSH
drive@metronews.ca

By their very nature, cars and trucks present numerous environmental issues, and not just because of what comes out of their tailpipes.

When something goes wrong and fluids leak out of a vehicle, mechanics and emergency responders usually sop up the mess with several different types of absorbent products that can have environmental issues of their own.

"The most common products are made from clay or diatomaceous earth," says Toby Wilson, president of Coco Products, which makes a more environment-friendly product called Coco Absorb from coconut fibre.

"Clay products are mined out of the ground, and they're not renewable. Plus, clay can catch fire when it comes into contact with vegetable oil and will spontaneously combust. We're seeing a lot more of that with biodiesel.

"And if perlite (a type of soft volcanic glass) comes in

contact with hydrochloric acid, it will create deadly fumes," he adds. "Our product is not reactive to anything out there."

Coco Absorb is made from coconut pith, also known as coir, which is found between the coconut's hard green outer shell and the familiar dark-

It's also used in upholstery. Some auto manufacturers use coir in their seats, and they're experimenting with it as a possible ingredient in lightweight plastics and other materials.

The coir's honeycomb-like structure consists of narrow hollow cells, which absorb fluids.

Unlike most absorbents, which mainly draw fluids into their outermost layers, the coconut pith uses capillary action to act like a sponge and draw liquids inside. It also holds them there even as it dries, so it doesn't leach potentially toxic fluids after disposal.

One of coir's best features is that, due to a naturally occurring chemical compound called phenol, it bonds with oil first, and can absorb several times its weight. Once it's completely saturated with oil, it won't absorb water.

Although research is still ongoing, coconut coir could therefore be used to contain and absorb oil spills with minimal environmental damage, sopping up the oil while

Core facts on coi

- Coconut trees don't require chemical fertilizers to grow. Each tree produces as many as 200 coconuts per year, making its fibre a renewable resource.
- Coconut coir can also be mixed with leftover waste paint so that it hardens into a solid that won't leach paint into the environment.
- Coconut-based absorbent is used at Walt Disney World, where it's most commonly used to soak up vomit.

leaving the clean water behind. Even when left there, the oil-soaked coir won't release any of it back into the water.

Coconut coir is also much lighter in weight than clay absorbents, which makes it easier to transport, store, and use.



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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries

March 21 - April 20

Someone will turn to you and you won't let them down. You like few things better than charging to the rescue, especially when backing the underdog against a bully.

♉ Taurus

April 21 - May 20

A colleague will make you an offer you find hard to refuse today, but can you trust them? Find out if it is genuine and, if it is, let them know quickly you want in on the game.

♊ Gemini

May 22 - June 21

There will be some remarkable developments in the final days of the year but conserve your energy. The less you do now the more you will gain later on.

♋ Cancer

June 22 - July 23

Someone will try to pressure you into justifying what you are doing. Do what feels right to you and, if others don't like it, that's just too bad.

♌ Leo

July 24 - Aug. 23

Try to build bridges to people you don't always get along with. Just because you have different outlooks does not mean you cannot be friends.

♍ Virgo

Aug. 24 - Sept. 23

Don't worry if you have fallen out with a loved one. A few days from now you will be the best of friends again, so don't take it personally if they don't seem to care. They do really.

♎ Libra

Sept. 24 - Oct. 23

Make time for family members and make sure they know how much you love them. It won't hurt to be a bit more emotionally expressive.

♏ Scorpio

Oct. 24 - Nov. 22

According to your solar chart this is a good day for doing nothing much, so sit back, relax and let life come to you.

♐ Sagittarius

Nov. 23 - Dec. 21

Deep down you are a big softie and what happens today will prove it. Someone who needs a helping hand will have much to thank you for. It could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

♑ Capricorn

Dec. 22 - Jan. 20

For best results you should try to be on the move today. If you stay in the same place you could miss out on something special. Get moving and see where fate takes you.

♒ Aquarius

Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

Make the most of Mars in your sign to try something new and maybe take a few risks. You have always been the adventurous sort and now you are determined to show you have absolutely no fear.

♓ Pisces

Feb. 20 - March 20

Take life at a sensible pace, especially if you are hosting friends and family over the holiday period. Don't try to do everything yourself.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan

Across

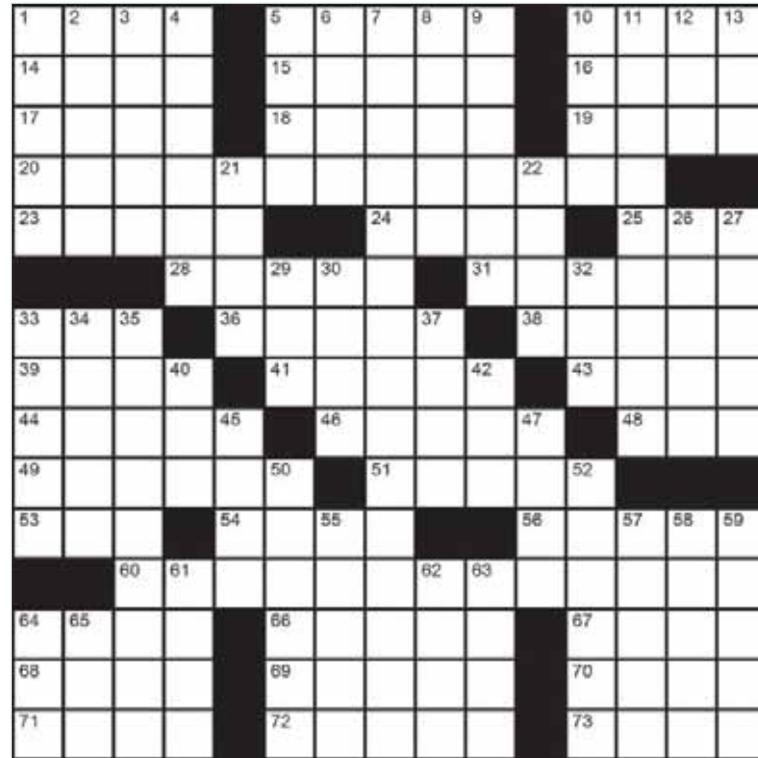
- Herd baby
- Pointer
- Hurt
- Spoken
- "Silver Bells" bit: "Children laughing / People passing / Meeting __ after..."
- Christmastime 'pet'
- Ms. Suvari
- Reindeers' sniffers
- "God __ Ye Merry, Gentlemen"
- "On the seventh day of Christmas / My true love gave to me / Seven __ __ ..." - Bob & Doug McKenzie, "12 Days of Christmas"
- "Silent Night": "in heavenly peace."
- "Let It Snow": "But the __ is so delightful."
- Mr. Capote, shortly
- Christmas star
- Court game
- Got [abbr.]
- Rudolph's straps
- Terre-__ (Newfoundland)
- "__! The Herald Angels Sing"
- Principle
- 'Game' suffix
- Cookies left for #28-Across, perhaps
- Tint-to-hair appliers
- Jr.'s fathers
- Reindeer crew

Down

- Member
- Threshold
- Ands: French
- Bellow!
- Fragrance
- Gift disguiser: 2 wds.
- __ in a Manger
- Bird of Jove
- Roman emperor
- Ms. Gilbert
- Mythological blood
- Mr. Kringle
- Religious song
- (Food packaging meas.)
- Fully satisfy

- Free passes, briefly
- "It's been __ pleasure."
- Mr. Bass
- Snowy droplets
- __ other (Without equals)

- "__ two minds..."
- "Jingle Bells": "A day or two ago / I thought I'd take a ride / And soon __ __ / Was seated by my side."
- Fragrant resin



Yesterday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at
metronews.ca/answers



Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Yesterday's Sudoku



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